S 1
.71/4
:796
hinders Rm. 327

Chester A. Crocker

Current Policy No. 796

The U.S. and Angola

United States Department of State
Bureau of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.

ROOM USE ONLY
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Following is a statement by Chester A. Crocker, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Washington, D.C., February 18, 1986.

I welcome this opportunity to speak to this committee today about the complex situation in southwestern Africa. The Angola-Namibia negotiations form an essential part of our policy for the region. Our objectives are clear: to restore and advance U.S. influence in the region; to expand our cooperative relations with African states; and to deny to the Soviet Union the opportunity to use its influence to exacerbate already dangerous situations in Angola, South Africa, and the other countries of the area.

Review of Progress

It is obvious, I believe, to all in this room that our interest and objectives are decidedly not served by a Namibia which is not free and by an Angola which is the scene of a bloody conflict and foreign intervention. Thus, we have worked hard to bring peace to Angola and independence to Namibia. In recent years we have made progress in pursuit of our goals. Allow me to review with you the path we have followed and where we are today.

In 1981, at the start of this Administration, there was no peace process at all underway in southwestern Africa. The quest for Namibian independence was moribund, South Africa sat seemingly unmovable on its side of the Angolan-Namibian border while some 30,000 Cubans sat across on their side of the same border. UNITA [National Union for the Total Independence of Angola] was fighting an apparently endless civil war. No one was talking to anyone else.

This blocked situation posed real dangers to the region and U.S. interests there. The *absence* of a viable Western strategy for Namibia decolonization and the *presence* of a seemingly permanent Soviet-Cuban military in Angola risked heightened polarization and open-ended opportunities for Moscow to exploit African frustration over Namibia and fuel internal and regional tensions. It was essential that we regain the initiative.

It took 2 years to engage Luanda and Pretoria in a real negotiation. It took another year to begin to erode the mutual mistrust and build confidence in an American role. But with the Lusaka accord of February 1984, the South Africans began the process of disengagement from their military positions in Angola in return for restraint by SWAPO [South West Africa People's Organization]. In November of the same year, the Angolans said they were ready to commit themselves to withdraw 20,000 Cuban troops over 3 years, starting with the beginning of implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435, the internationally agreed independence plan for Namibia. While this proposal was, in itself, not sufficient to conclude an agreement, it was an important step forward in that Luanda had accepted the principle that the independence of Namibia could only take place in the context of the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.

It is, therefore, important to note that by early 1985, we had made real progress in devising and gaining acceptance for a framework for resolving the dual question of Namibian independence and Cuban troop presence in Angola. I would emphasize that this progress in the years 1981–85 helped thwart Soviet goals of advancing its positions in southern Africa. Moscow did not encourage our efforts on Angola and has clearly been placed on the defensive there, in Mozambique, and elsewhere.

However, the negotiating process has always moved in fits and starts and has been characterized by mutual suspicion among the parties to the conflict—South Africa, the MPLA [Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola], UNITA, and SWAPO—and by continuing efforts, sometimes more intense than others, to pursue the military options. Moscow has fueled distrust and fear among the local parties.

Thus, after we tabled fresh compromise proposals—a synthesis of both South African and Angolan ideas on the timing and sequencing of Cuban troop withdrawal—in March 1985, each of the parties pulled back from taking the tough decisions needed to advance the process. In South Africa, a government—under heavy pressure from internal protest and increasing international isolation—pursued other means to accomplish its ends, including greater emphasis on military operations within Angola. The MPLA government in Luanda, buoyed by a massive infusion of Soviet equipment, also retreated from the negotiating path. The result was a major MPLA military thrust into southern Angola in late 1985 which was marked by greater Soviet involvement and South African participation in support of UNITA than had been witnessed before.

We believe that fighting brought home to both sides the dangers of military escalation. In recent months we have had several important meetings with both the MPLA and the South African Government in which the negotiating context has been further defined. We are not yet at the point of success, and frankly, prospects in such a complex enterprise and these negotiations must always be viewed as problematical.

U.S. Reception of UNITA's Leader

These negotiations, and the continuing warfare inside Angola and across its borders into Namibia, represent the backdrop against which the visit of Dr. Jonas Savimbi of UNITA occurred. Dr. Savimbi's visit has generated a lot of public interest and some debate, much of it divorced from the political and military realities of southern Africa. Dr. Savimbi spoke effectively on his own behalf and most of you had the opportunity to hear him directly. He told us he had a very useful visit and was returning to Angola with high morale and no doubts about the Administration's support for his efforts.

We do support UNITA; it has sustained a long and brave fight against Soviet and Cuban political and military designs. Our reception of him here was an element of that support. It sent a strong signal to Luanda and Moscow that the United States views UNITA as a nationalist organization with legitimate aspirations of playing a role in the process of national reconciliation that must come about if Angola is eventually to achieve real peace. We intend to be supportive of UNITA in an effective and appropriate manner. As the President said in his State of the Union message, we want to support all those fighting for freedom.

And, as the President said in his important speech to the UN General Assembly in October of last year, we view the Soviet Union as having a responsibility to take action to defuse situations of regional tension which have been made worse by its own policies. We will continue to make that point to Moscow through direct communication and otherwise as well.

Constant U.S. Goals

Some may perceive that the reception Savimbi received here signals a change in U.S. policy. It does not. Our strategy recognizes that the scene on the ground in Angola has changed, largely owing to Soviet actions, and that our ability to respond diplomatically and in other ways has been measurably increased by the repeal of the Clark amendment, effective October 1, 1985. However, I want to categorically state here that the basis and goals of our policy remain unchanged: we seek negotiated solution that will bring independence to Namibia and withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola. Such a solution opens the way for Angolans to reconcile and achieve peace.

Allow me to say a few words about the broader context of our policy. First, we do not believe that in a contemporary period, as in any other period, that diplomacy and pressure represent polar opposites or alternative strategies. This is also the case in southern Africa where virtually all parties pursue their interests through a wide variety of means.

Inevitably, perhaps, both the South Africans and the Angolans are pursuing several tracks of policy to advance their interests. The same can be said about UNITA and the MPLA as they contend over the future of Angola.

For our part, we recognize that our diplomacy plays out against a backdrop of real and tangible pressures that exist on the ground. For the past several years, we have worked to create a political framework for the ultimate resolution of the intertwined problems of Angola and Namibia. At the level of general principles, we have succeeded.

All of the parties now accept that there is a real connection between Cuban troop withdrawal and Namibian independence. They accept that lack of movement on one side is an obstacle to the solution of other problems. But we have not yet been able to translate that into detailed accords specifying the timing and sequencing of Cuban troop withdrawal in relation to South Africa's commitments under Resolution 435.

It remains our analysis that neither the South African Government nor the Government in Angola, nor SWAPO, nor UNITA can accomplish their goals through outright military victory. The only ones to benefit by continued warfare are the Soviets and Cubans; hence, the continuing relevance of a political framework. That framework offers a context for the multiple political, military, and economic pressures at play. However, that does not mean that the parties will not on occasion try to solve their problems via the deceptively easy way of escalating the war.

This past year we have seen the MPLA government, strongly backed by Moscow and Havana, pursue such an escalation. They sought to reverse 2 years of UNITA gains and deal a body blow to that movement. They failed. It is important in our view that they continue to fail. Just as we are determined that our diplomacy not be used by the South Africans as a cover for the pursuit of other objectives, we feel the same way about the government in Luanda.

The point I am making, then, is that diplomacy requires to be effective a degree of pressure that drives the parties toward a political compromise. But pressure—pure physical power—does not in itself represent solutions and, in our analysis, cannot be effective in the absence of a meaningful political context. As Secretary Shultz has put it, it takes both power *and* diplomacy.

While here, Dr. Savimbi stated his view that there is no possibility for either side in Angola to gain an outright military victory and that national reconciliation will have to come about through a process of negotiation. He emphasized that UNITA does not wish to destroy the MPLA. UNITA, he said, seeks rather to convince the leaders in Luanda of the need to compromise and reach a political settlement. We share Dr. Savimbi's belief that there are no military solutions in Angola. And he affirmed to us his support for our efforts, which focus on the linked issues of Resolution 435 and Cuban troop withdrawal, to provide the political context necessary to achieve peace and reconciliation in Angola.

The Need for a Clear Statement From Congress

It is appropriate that this committee review the situation in Angola and U.S. policy to that troubled part of the world. It is, of course, up to the committee to decide what position it wishes to take on this issue. I would like to suggest, however, that America's best interests would be served by a clear statement from Congress that this country is committed to negotiated resolutions in southern Africa but that our willingness to negotiate should not be used by others to pursue their own aggressive ends. In this regard, and keeping in mind the words of Dr. Savimbi when he visited here, I think it important that our government, both the executive and legislative branches, make clear that we support those who fight for freedom and political solutions. How that support should be manifested is a topic for further legislative-executive cooperation and consultation. ■

READEX FICHE